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In The Nation

And Then Mr. Khrushchev
Changed the Subject

By ARTHUR KROCK

WASHINGTON, Nov. 20—A transcript of the working papers prepared for the seminar of World Brotherhood in Bern last August is now available. In the midst of East-West tensions made more acute by the mounting crisis over the four-power occupation of Berlin some of the material produced for the distinguished international group in the Swiss capital is worth a pause for earnest consideration.

Among the Brotherhood officers and those interested in its mission are Chancellor Adenauer of West Germany, Paul-Henri Spaak of Belgium, Paul Reynaud of France, Madame Pandit of India and these Americans: Arthur H. Compton, Allen W. Dulles, Herbert H. Lehman, John J. McCloy, George Meany, William Benton, Eleanor Roosevelt, Adlai E. Stevenson and Paul G. Hoffman (who conceived the organization). If these names do not bring persuasion that this is not just another collection of do-gooders uttering windy rhetoric, then some extracts from the transcript may establish the contrary.

Attributed to "a Polish educator" was a working paper in which these cogent statements were made:

"Recognize . . . that the Communist countries are there and cannot be wished away by propaganda . . . that all is not bad in Eastern countries and Western countries can learn from . . . [Communist] experiments . . . through committees to study the way to eliminate stereotypes and suspicion of communism . . . to study changes in both systems to find ways to bring them nearer together [and bring about] . . . change [in] the language which evolves the suspicion.

"The recommendations cannot be based on the assumption that the other side has no law, no freedom, no morals . . . and we must teach the other side what to do. . . . We must assume that the other side is not worse, but different.

Question and Answer

The wisdom of this is not eliminated by the obvious fact that Soviet Russia now stands much more in the way of this formula than does the United States. But that was most impressively pointed out in Bern by former Premier Reynaud. His theme

was a question asked by Lehman: "Is it possible to come to an agreement with the Communists?"

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The Moscow dictator and all the leaders of Russia are revolutionaries [answered Reynaud]. They hate and despise capitalism. . . . They are afraid of [our] high standard of life [and] feel comparison would be dangerous for their own regime. . . . They are proud of their extraordinary success [in directing] their nation to the mass study of pure science and the production of atomic arms and heavy industry . . . and never mind the rest: bad roads, few autos, no bicycles, etc.

Western posters say: "Enjoy your life, drink that whisky, smoke those cigarettes!" In Russia they say: "Be proud of your country!"

Reynaud also reported a significant interview with Khrushchev. "Some of your requests," I told him, "cannot be admitted by the Allies. We should speak of the problems that could be solved—for example, that of the Middle East." Said Khrushchev, "Yes, but the Allies refused to put it on the agenda of the Summit Conference." I told him that, speaking in my own name, I thought that was a mistake. The idea of our British and American friends . . . that the Middle East is not Soviet business . . . is unreal, not to say childish." Then Reynaud, expressing to the seminar his "amazement that public opinion was not more moved" by Communist China's switch from approval, of birth control to opposition, said:

China has been exciting Russia against Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia. Why is Russia so obedient? Is it because Khrushchev is wondering about the time when China with her billion inhabitants will announce: "My vital space is Siberia"? . . . And when Khrushchev, on the subject of a united Germany, asked me why we want a united Europe, my answer was: "Because in twenty-five years you will have one billion Chinese."

He stopped a few moments, then spoke of another problem, but I am sure he understood perfectly what I meant.

There is no minor staff and there are no seminarians to dismiss as just another bunch of bleeding hearts.

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